

Midnight 651

Chapter 651

Dorothy pressed her lips together, feeling their dryness as she searched for the right words—finally, a sentence squeezed through.

"Capitalism is so terrifying. I can't shake the feeling I'm caught in some grand scheme!"

Everett spread his arms wide, a mischievous grin on his face. "Guilty as charged. I've been scheming to win you over for years."

She could not help but laugh. "And to think you've been waiting all this time, Mr. Lopez. It must've been exhausting."

"Not really. The chase makes the victory all the sweeter."

Dorothy playfully smacked his arm. "You should go find Jeffrey! I need to call Karen back, and then let's all have dinner together. Jeffrey's been to Swevia Country and practically kidnapped my best friend. He definitely owes us a meal."

Everett nodded with a chuckle. "Sounds like a plan."

...

Jeffrey was in his office, animatedly recounting the day's conference room drama to Karen.

His expressions were over the top, spittle flying with every word!

"I always knew Everett had a soft spot for Dorothy, but I never expected him to throw away all his principles!"

Karen was equally surprised and itching to witness the scene herself—the top brass at Lopez Corporation, slack-jawed and wide-eyed, probably wondering if Mr. Lopez had been possessed. It would have been quite the spectacle.

"Would you answer my call during a meeting like that?"

"Like today?" Jeffrey asked.

Karen nodded.

Jeffrey pondered for a moment. "I'd probably stand up and step out to take it. I mean, with everyone there and Everett chairing the meeting, answering right there wouldn't look great."

Seeing her silence, Jeffrey quickly added, "Don't be mad. How about this? I promise I'll do the same next time, okay?"

Karen could not help but feel exasperated at his jittery reaction.

"Why would I be mad? I fully support your dedication to work, and I think your approach is right! Jeffrey, you and Everett are different."

If Everett did something outrageous, it would simply prove his deep love, putting Dorothy above all else.

But if Jeffrey did the same, it would be labeled as irresponsible, frivolous, and neglectful of his duties.

"Why do I feel like you're not exactly praising me?" Jeffrey murmured, a hint of annoyance in his tone. "Do you think I'm less because I work under Everett and am not the CEO?"

"Where is this coming from?" She asked.

"Because you said we're not the same."

Karen shook her head. "Of course, you're not. Just focus on doing well at Lopez Corporation. Everett's already given you plenty of freedom."

Jeffrey stood up from his office chair and walked over to take Karen's hand. "If you want to be a CEO's wife, I can start my own company!"

He was just lazy, enjoying the easy life under Everett's wing, but that did not mean he lacked the ability.

Karen quickly waved the idea away. "Do you think being a CEO is easy? Look how busy Everett is! If you had to handle all that, could you manage?"

Jeffrey puckered his lips, squinting with a playful smile. "I could, but then I'd have no time for you."

"So, stay with Lopez Corporation."

"Karen," Jeffrey suddenly called her name softly, "How about you come work at Lopez Corporation? Be my secretary. We could stick together all day, and you could keep an eye on me every minute!"

Work at Lopez Corporation?

Karen paused, then declined gracefully.

"Let's not. I'm not qualified enough."

"Be my secretary. I'll be the one who decides if you're qualified. And I think you're perfect for it."

At the Lopez Corporation, choosing his secretary was indeed within his freedom.

"Let's talk about it later."

Right now, Karen definitely could not join the Lopez Corporation.

Chapter 652

It would not be long before her dear friend would find herself at odds with the Lopez Corporation.

The very thought of working there was awkward enough to churn her stomach.

Right on cue, Dorothy's call came through, breaking the tension. They quickly set a lunch date.

After hanging up, Karen faced Jeffrey, who was still wearing a look of utter confusion.

"I just want some time to find myself, not to get a job at the Lopez Corporation by batting my eyelashes," Karen stated firmly.

"Excuses, all excuses!" Jeffrey retorted.

"Then why even ask?" She shot back.

Jeffrey was taken aback, speechless for a moment.

Karen tossed him his car keys and said, "Let's go. Dorothy and the others are heading to the diner."

...

After their meal, Everett and Dorothy planned to head back to Swevia Country.

First, Everett needed rest to heal, and a check-up from Dr. Quincy was in order. Second, Dorothy had decided that when it was time to leave, she would depart directly from Swevia Country.

She could not bear the thought of another goodbye with Everett in Eldorria City.

Unbeknownst to Everett, their friend Kevin had already booked their flights, including Abigail and Langston's.

The night before their departure, Everett received a call from Jonathan.

"I've seen the children's names—Abigail Sanchez, Langston Sanchez? What a mess! Change their names immediately! They carry the Lopez blood. How can they have the Sanchez surname?"

"Why can't Dorothy's children have her surname?" Everett countered calmly.

"You! Are you trying to drive me to an early grave?" Jonathan's voice was steeped in displeasure.

"You used to be such a good kid, obedient and sensible. What's gotten into you now?"

Everett glanced upstairs, where Dorothy was laughing and playing with the kids, frowning slightly.

"If you want the children to change their surname, fine. But I have a condition."

"They're Lopez children by birth, and you dare set conditions to change their surnames to the rightful one?" Jonathan scoffed. "It's that Dorothy putting words in your mouth!"

"She didn't say anything. This is my decision."

Jonathan paused, then said, "Let's hear it then. What condition do you have for your father?"

Everett sat back on the sofa, legs crossed, his voice steady and deep. "Hand over Heather to me, and let me deal with her however I see fit."

There was a silence on the other end.

"If you don't agree, my son and daughter will forever bear the surname Sanchez, and without this father's consent, not even your most influential connections can change that."

Jonathan had not expected such a demand.

He thought his son would ask for something along the lines of a lifetime with Dorothy or for the Lopez family's blessing to marry her.

"This matter is for your mother to decide, not me."

"My mother protects Heather simply because she once saved her life. I've repaid Heather; we're even."

"So why go after her?"

"Heather and the Lopez family may be square, but she's not done with what she did to Dorothy's mother."

At the mention of Dorothy's mother, Jonathan's voice noticeably dropped.

Still, he feigned calm. "I've looked into it. Dorothy's mother died of a heart attack. How can you blame Heather for that? At most, she said something that upset her. Even if you go to court with her, she won't get the death sentence."

"Whether Heather's crime is punishable by death is for Dorothy to decide."

Chapter 653

Everett mulled over it for what felt like hours, trying to understand why Dorothy was adamant about him not attending her mother's memorial. Surely, it was not just because her mom appreciated peace and quiet, as she had claimed.

Kenneth was welcome while he was not, and the only logical explanation Everett could come up with was the bitter truth surrounding Dorothy's mother's passing.

After much contemplation, he figured that the crux of the matter must lie with Heather. Dorothy probably believed that if it were not for his presence, Heather would not have been green with envy and lash out in a fit of jealousy, and her mother would still be alive.

Everett was indirectly responsible for the tragedy. That must be why Dorothy could not bear the thought of him paying his respects.

After all, he had never hurt Bella. In fact, he was the one to arrange for her top-notch surgery with a renowned doctor from abroad.

Now that he thought he had pinpointed the cause, he was determined to unearth the real culprit. He wanted Dorothy to be able to settle her scores and release the pent-up anger in her heart.

Plus, it would also prevent Kenneth from exploiting the situation.

"I can't just say 'yes' to this. I need to talk it over with your mother." Jonathan sighed heavily into the phone. "You've got to understand the tough spot I'm in here! When Heather stabbed you, and your life was hanging by a thread, I had someone deal with her already. But your mother insisted on stopping it. Otherwise, Heather would have been long gone."

Jonathan was not one to mince words; a menace like Heather needed to be dealt with once and for all.

He disagreed with his wife's constant talk of gratitude and repaying kindness.

In fact, Heather's boldness was bolstered by the very backing of the Lopez family. She grew more audacious over time, even daring to dabble in murderous plots.

"When you've settled things with Mom, I'll talk to Dorothy about changing my children's surname," Everett said, setting his terms.

"Changing their surnames needs her approval?"

"And does Heather paying for her crimes need my mother's approval, too?"

Jonathan was at a loss for words, then finally conceded. "Alright, I'll talk to your mother. I'm tired of arguing over someone like Heather to the point of father and son falling out."

Everett knew his father wasn't just giving in; he was in a bind and had no choice but to give in.

The true power within the Lopez family had already shifted to him, and no one else was suitable to take over the reins.

Regardless of the outcome, neither of them wanted a rift between father and son.

Just as Jonathan was about to hang up, Everett asked coldly, "Did my mother have a hand in what Heather did to Dorothy's mother?"

"What are you implying?" Jonathan's voice rose sharply.

"I mean just what I said."

"Of course not! Your mother was just propping Heather up, that's all. She never liked Dorothy, and you knew that. Your mother thought she could break you up if she kept opposing you two. And even if Heather had those murderous intentions, do you think she'd dare to confess them to your mother?"

Heather has played the timid and gentle woman before your mother and me all these years. Even I was fooled."

Everett's brow furrowed deeper. "I hope what you're saying is true."

"Dorothy didn't tell you anything, did she?" Jonathan quickly asked.

"No, it's just something I wanted to ask."

"Everett, do you really see your mother as cold-hearted and cruel like Heather? Don't forget, you're her flesh and blood! If it wasn't for her carrying you for nine months, enduring labor to bring you into this world, Dorothy wouldn't have had the fortune of being connected to the Lopez family in any way!"

Chapter 654

Everett pressed his lips, then hung up the phone.

Shortly after, Dorothy descended the stairs to find him deep in thought, his handsome face tense, looking rather unhappy. She approached him cautiously.

"What's wrong?"

Everett reached out and naturally pulled her into his embrace. "Just thinking about when we'll head back to Bay Residence after this trip."

"Once your injury is all healed up."

He looked up at her. "You mean 'we' are going back together, right?"

"Everett, why do you always ask that?" Dorothy did not want to lie to him, so she simply smiled and took his hand. "Please don't, I don't like it."

Her disapproval was enough to silence any remaining words Everett had.

If Dorothy did not like something, he would not do it.

"Let's get some sleep, okay? We have a flight to catch tomorrow, and I'm pretty wiped out."

"Okay."

...

The next day, Everett and Dorothy boarded the plane to Swevia Country.

He booked the entire first-class cabin thanks to Abigail and Langston's presence, thinking it would give the kids some space to play.

"You've got money, but you don't have to waste it like this."

Dorothy felt the pinch!

Even though she knew Everett's wealth was vast and such expenses were trivial to him, Dorothy, who had climbed up from humble beginnings, had thriftiness etched into her very bones.

After all, the cost of this flight could cover what she made during all three years of junior high.

Maybe even more.

"Feeling the pinch?"

"Yeah."

Dorothy nodded honestly.

Everett thought momentarily, then said, "How about this: I let you manage all my finances? That way, you'd know whenever I'm about to buy something or spend money, and you could always remind me to save."

"Never mind. Your money is too much for me to manage."

Even Karen would not dare to take over Jeffrey's assets, let alone Everett's! Being a core figure of the Lopez Corporation, the amount of money he had was a number Dorothy could not even fathom.

"If it's too much, you could hire someone to manage it."

"No, thanks. I'll pass and leave your money to your own! I don't have the head for finances."

Seeing her head shake like a bobblehead, Everett did not press the issue.

After all, his money was her money.

The ten-hour flight swiftly passed, and the plane smoothly landed at Mellamo Airport.

The people who had come to pick them up were waiting, bowing respectfully upon seeing Everett.

"Sir."

"Mhm."

Everett handed off the luggage to them, and then, with one hand holding Abigail and the other holding Dorothy's, they headed to the car.

No sooner had they settled in than Dorothy's phone began to ring.

He glanced over instinctively, his gaze darkening.

It was Kenneth.

Why could he not just leave them be?

Knowing Everett was upset, Dorothy did not answer immediately but instead smiled. "He's probably just concerned about whether we arrived safely. Don't be like that!"

"My girl doesn't need his concern."

"Everett, don't be so childish."

Abigail turned around from the front seat, looked at her dad, and stuck out her tongue. "Langston, Mommy says daddy's childish! Haha!"

"Daddy's just jealous of Kenneth." Langston always had a knack for hitting the nail on the head.

Dorothy didn't know what to say in response.

Everett, however, nodded in agreement, openly admitting, "That's right, how can I not be when your mommy is so charming? Kenneth always tries to take my place."

Dorothy sighed in exasperation. "Everett, don't teach the kids wrong things!"

Chapter 655

"Langston could tell. Are you saying I taught him that?"

Even the kid had caught on to Kenneth's ulterior motive!

Dorothy knew she could not outtalk Everett with his businessman's silver tongue, so she simply closed her eyes and pretended to sleep.

Luckily, Kenneth only called once.

Back at the Lopez Private Hospital, Quincy was already in place, just waiting for Everett to return.

She arranged a battery of tests, fearing any missed detail could pose a hidden threat.

Perhaps because Quincy was aware of Everett's germophobia, she had another male doctor assist with any examinations that required physical contact.

As the test results came in one by one, all looking good, everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

"Mr. Lopez, you've got the constitution of an ox! I won't lie. I was worried sick while you were out of the country."

After all, a through-and-through wound was no joke. Forget infection at the wound site; even a tiny blood clot could spell disaster.

"Much obliged, Dr. Quincy." Dorothy finally exhaled in relief.

"Just doing my duty," Quincy replied with a smile, looking at her. "You go be with Mr. Lopez now. I'll change his dressing and remove the stitches tomorrow morning. You've both had a long day; you must be exhausted."

Dorothy nodded. "Thank you, Dr. Quincy."

All Dorothy could muster was thanks, leaving Quincy at a loss for how to communicate with her.

Walking out of the doctor's office, Dorothy suddenly remembered the missed call from Kenneth.

With Everett not around, she quickly returned the call.

After a few rings, Kenneth picked up.

"Dorothy."

"Kenneth, did you need something?"

"Did Everett stop you from taking my call earlier?" Kenneth's direct question caught Dorothy off guard.

She hesitated, then said, "No, I just did not see it. There was a lot to sort out coming back to Swevia Country. I had to accompany Everett for his check-up, too."

"Oh, I thought he was stopping you." Kenneth's tone was noticeably different, lacking its previous warmth and filled with a hint of sarcasm, "Did you know Everett sealed off Bella's cemetery? Only direct kins can visit now."

Dorothy was stunned. "What?"

This was rather typical of Everett!

Had he been plotting this while standing at the cemetery gate that day?

"Dorothy, Everett better not overstep. I've stopped competing with him. Does he really need to drive the point home? Am I not even allowed to be your friend?"

Dorothy could tell Kenneth was genuinely angry and rushed to soothe him.

"Kenneth, he's just a bit jealous, alright? Don't take it to heart. I'll talk to him when I get back. And about the cemetery, if it really comes to it, I'll have a word with the manager, claim you're direct kin to my mother."

"I don't want to put you in a tough spot, but he's really crossing the line! It's totally justified that you don't want him visiting your mother's grave. No one could argue with that! He's just clueless, yet he has the nerve to seal off the cemetery."

Even if Everett sealed it, he had no right to be there!

"Right now, Everett is still in the dark. If he knew the truth, he'd naturally stay away."

"Dorothy, I'm sorry, I've lost my composure. I shouldn't have brought up painful memories."

Chapter 656

"No worries," Dorothy said, tugging at the corner of her lips. "Kenneth, there's less than two weeks left. I don't want to have any regrets."

"I get it."

"Thanks for understanding."

Dorothy chuckled. "There's a stir over at Byte 7. You'll still need to keep me posted, okay? I appreciate it."

"Sure, no problem at all. I'm happy to keep an eye on things for you."

After hanging up the phone, Dorothy took a deep breath before heading into the ward.

Hospitals were not exactly playgrounds for kids, so Everett had practically cleared out the local toy stores, all so his children could have a little joy.

As Dorothy pushed the door open, she saw Everett meticulously stacking blocks, with Abigail clapping happily beside him, exclaiming, "Daddy, you're amazing! It's so tall!"

Langston snorted, cookie in hand, glancing over briefly before returning his gaze to the computer screen.

Sighing, Dorothy moved the computer further away.

"Langston, do you not care about your eyesight? Abigail, no more sweets for you today!"

Both kids pouted, then turned their puppy-dog eyes to Everett.

Everett shrugged his shoulders. "I'm no match for her."

Dorothy walked back to her bed and sat down.

Everett stood up and approached her, raising an eyebrow. "You called Kenneth back, didn't you?"

"How did you know..."

She cut herself off, realizing she had been baited.

"You don't have to hide it from me. I'm not stopping you."

He might not have said anything, but the topic was out there now, so she might as well clear the air.

"Why did you seal off the cemetery? Kenneth often helps me by cleaning the gravestone, showing respect on my behalf."

"That's your mother's grave, not his. How does that count as showing respect?"

It should be me doing it if anyone. What business does Kenneth have with it?"

Dorothy did not want to argue, so she took a deep breath and said softly, "Don't be as stubborn as Jeffrey, it puts me in a tough spot."

"Don't worry. Your mother's gravestone will always be the cleanest."

Dorothy was speechless. It was not about how clean the gravestone was!

She should have known she could not reason with a jealous Everett.

The next morning arrived, and it was time for Everett to get his stitches removed.

Dorothy got up early to draw a bath for him, knowing he needed to soak before the procedure since he had to avoid getting the wound wet for a few days.

When Quincy walked in, Everett had just finished bathing, wearing a dark silk robe, lazily leaning against the headboard while Dorothy dried his hair.

Truth be told, he was strikingly handsome.

Even Quincy could not help but take a few extra glances at his features.

"Dr. Quincy, glad you could make it."

Dorothy set down the hairdryer when she saw her and got up to make room for Quincy.

"Yeah."

Quincy slipped on disposable medical gloves and began to disinfect Everett's wound.

Suddenly, she looked up at Dorothy and said, "Ms. Sanchez, could you fetch me the medicine from my desk in my office? I need it."

"Of course!" Dorothy nodded and left the room promptly.

Once she was gone, Quincy started the delicate task of removing the stitches.

The room was filled with the sound of her scissors snipping until she paused and said in a low voice, "Did Jonathan tell you?"

"Tell me what?"

"He's thinking of having me marry you."

Chapter 657

The last time Quincy was dragged back home, she thought it was just another tedious blind date set up by her folks. To her shock, they dropped a bombshell: she was expected to marry Everett!

Of course, she was dead against it.

While at the hospital, Quincy saw how much Everett loved Dorothy with her own eyes!

To agree to marry Everett would be like playing the other woman.

She was not about to stoop that low.

But in the cutthroat world of business, only the strong could survive. Quincy's family simply did not have the muscle to stand up to the Lopez family, leaving them without a choice. Though Quincy's dad and Jonathan were old college buddies, the marriage proposal was offered in such a high-and-mighty way that turning it down would be a slap in the face—and could flip their friendly relations to sour in the blink of an eye.

Besides the crux of the matter was that Quincy was the underdog in her family.

They favored sons over daughters.

She had made peace with it; she did not hanker after the family fortune. In fact, she felt somewhat liberated, knowing her brother would take over the family business, leaving her free to pursue her passion for medicine.

But who would have thought there would still be a way for her to be of use to her family?

"Absolutely no way," Everett stated flatly, his tone leaving no room for negotiation, not even bothering to look her in the eye.

"I know," Quincy murmured, pressing her lips together, finding it hard to speak up. "So, could you convince Jonathan to voluntarily back off this business marriage? My family... we're practically voiceless against the Lopez Corporation."

She had wanted to have this very conversation with Everett before he and Dorothy flew home, but she held back, hoping the Lopez family would change their minds once they were back.

But just before she came to change his dressings, Quincy's father had called her again.

The gist was to use any means necessary to make Everett agree to the marriage. That way, Quincy's family could hitch their wagon to a star and climb the social ladder by joining forces with the Lopez Corporation! He even warned her not to screw it up, reminding her of the years of care and upbringing they had invested in her, suggesting she owed it to the Quincy family to make this contribution.

Desperate and cornered, she had maneuvered Dorothy out of the room to speak to Everett alone.

Seeing Everett's unresponsive demeanor, Quincy bit her lower lip and mustered her courage, saying, "I did save your life, after all. All I'm asking is for you to help me out of a tight spot. Is that really too much to ask?"

Everett finally met her gaze, though his expression remained unreadable.

"I've told you. I'm not going to marry you."

This marriage was dead in the water, so Quincy had nothing to fear.

"Could you at least talk to Jonathan and my dad?" She pleaded.

She knew Everett would not marry her, but she could not withstand the pressure from home. All her hopes were pinned on him now.

"After Dorothy and I remarry, he'll drop the idea," Everett stated, aware that talking to his father would be futile.

Just like the time they tried to impose Heather upon him.

He could refuse and ignore but could not control his parents' actions.

Quincy got the hint and nodded reluctantly. "Then you and Dorothy should get remarried quickly, maybe even get your marriage license this month."

Everett's lips twitched into a semblance of a smile.

That was also his wish.

When Dorothy returned, their conversation had ended, and the ward regained its previous quiet.

"Dr. Quincy, is this the right medication?" Dorothy asked, holding up a vial.

Quincy took it, nodding. "Yes, that's the one. Thanks for fetching it."

"No problem at all." Dorothy smiled, and then her eyes fell on Everett's wound. The sight of the fresh stitches, like a centipede creeping across the skin, was disturbing.

A pang of pain shot through Dorothy's heart, knowing he had suffered this wound for her.

Observing Dorothy's expression, Quincy gently advised, "Ms. Sanchez, Mr. Lopez cares so much for you. You two really should remarry soon."

Chapter 658

Dorothy was caught off guard by Quincy's sudden nudge towards marriage. The idea of Quincy rushing them into tying the knot surprised her.

She chuckled. "Let's wait until Everett's all healed up."

"But he's getting his stitches out soon, and a little scar isn't going to stop you two from heading down to the city hall and making it official," Quincy insisted.

Dorothy glanced at Everett, sensing they might have had a conversation she was not privy to. It was unlike Quincy to be so forward; she had often admired her relationship with Everett, but they were not close enough for her to meddle in their marriage plans.

Everett met her gaze with an open, honest expression, not giving away any signs of a secret pact with Quincy.

"We want to take things slowly, Dr. Quincy. But thanks anyway," Dorothy interceded quickly, hoping to avoid any further pressure.

"Sure, no problem," Quincy replied with a smile, stuffing her hands into her lab coat pockets and turning to leave.

As she walked away, Dorothy realized that Quincy had taken the medicine she had just retrieved from her office back with her. What was the point of asking her to fetch it if it was just going back to her office? She had thought it was for Everett's use.

While she pondered the oddity, Everett reached out and pulled her into his embrace, holding her tight to prevent any chance of escape.

"How exactly do you plan on taking things 'slowly'? Let's hear it," Everett prodded.

"We can't just rush into getting a certificate," Dorothy countered.

Everett was not ready to drop the subject, especially after Quincy's remark. "We already have kids; how can you call that rushing?" Everett had been plotting for over a decade, and this was anything but hasty to him.

The word 'rush' seemed out of place at this moment.

Concerned about touching his fresh wound, Dorothy did not dare to struggle too much. She softly called out, "Everett... Everett, let me go first."

"Agree to marry me, and I'll let you go."

"Stop being childish." Dorothy sighed, exasperated. "We've both been through a divorce already. I need to think this through properly. When I have my answer, I'll tell you. Don't push me to decide."

Feeling Everett's grip relax, Dorothy managed to step away from his arms. She quickly changed the subject. "Are you hungry? I don't feel like having toast this morning. I wonder if the chef knows how to make corn chowder. I'll go ask."

She made her excuse to leave, but Everett was not fooled.

Recalling Quincy's earlier words, he grabbed his phone and texted his father Jonathan.

[I won't marry anyone but Dorothy.]

Jonathan replied quickly.

[Did Quincy's girl come after you? Everett, I won't pressure you like your mom, but Quincy is a good catch. Skilled doctor, caring, easy-going. Lock it down while you can; Quincy's family owes me, and they'll gladly give up their daughter.]

In the business world, daughters were often treated as commodities, bargaining chips for cooperation and contracts. Their parents spoke of them as treasured jewels, yet in reality, they did not care who their daughters married or what kind of life awaited them after the wedding.

Everett found the message meaningless, so he did not reply.

His father's words hinted at an acknowledgment that Dorothy might eventually leave. So, he suggested to 'lock it down' but did not press for an immediate relationship.

Perhaps to avoid further souring their relationship, Jonathan quickly followed up with another message. [About getting revenge for Dorothy, your mother and I have discussed it. She's agreed to let you deal with Heather as you see fit.]

Chapter 659

Everett finally replied to Jonathan, [I'll send an escort.]

[Change the children's surname first!] Jonathan was all about business, not acting unless he was sure about the deal's success.

Everett snorted dismissively and did not bother replying.

It was a battle of endurance now—a waiting game to see who would lose their cool first.

He knew his parents were all about keeping up appearances. If the press got wind that their grandchildren bore the surname Sanchez instead of Lopez, they would consider it a massive humiliation.

Not that Everett cared much for such vanities.

When Dorothy returned with a bowl of corn chowder, Everett was already buried in work.

His stitches had just been removed, and he really should not have been moving around so much. He needed rest, but Dorothy knew all too well he was not a man who could rest easy.

The man on a video call with Everett was briefing him on a project, Everett's biggest venture for the following year: breaking into the electronics market with a new smartphone brand.

This was not Dorothy's area of expertise. She was so out of her depth that she would not even qualify as a due diligence assistant on this project.

Thus, she pondered momentarily before booting up her laptop and diving into an online tech forum.

The forum was a haven for experts, and despite the casual 'haha's' peppering the posts, the more nonchalant someone seemed, the more likely they were an expert in disguise.

And when it came to these experts, Dorothy's mind went straight to Byte 7.

That was what everyone called him – it seemed no one knew his real name. He was ghostly pale and spoke English fluently, so he most likely was a fellow countryman.

Moments later, Everett finally noticed her.

Pushing his laptop aside, his voice was deep with a nasal edge as he said, "That flash drive you asked Byte 7 to fix, is it done?"

"Not yet."

"What's so important on it that you had to go to him?"

Everett had some insight into tech matters. After all, men are often inexplicably drawn to high-tech gadgets.

"Some documents. It'll be a hassle if they're lost."

Her answer was as vague as it could be.

Of course, Everett knew the contents must be crucial, or else why would she pay top dollar for Byte 7's services? He also remembered how desperate she had been to meet Byte 7, willing to spend the night at Bay Residence if needed.

"Someone recommended him to me for this new company project."

Dorothy blinked. "You're thinking of bringing Byte 7 into the Lopez Corporation?"

"Just a collaboration. He may not have what it takes to join the Lopez Corporation."

"Oh... I heard he's quite something."

She had been casually browsing the forum and had already stumbled upon numerous posts singing Byte 7's praises.

Clearly, Byte 7 was a legend in the tech world.

"I might discuss the collaboration with him in person. Want me to nudge him about the flash drive?"

"No need." Dorothy shook her head. "He'll contact me when it's fixed."

Everett narrowed his eyes, recalling the night at Bay Residence when Byte 7 had called Dorothy out...

"Are you two close?"

"Not really," Dorothy answered honestly. "Met him twice, and he was pretty rude both times, very impatient."

Byte 7 had an air about him, casual yet sharp, as if nothing mattered but also as if he could not stand anyone getting too close.

Whenever he spoke, it was with a tone so cutting and elusive that no one could truly guess what he was thinking.

Chapter 660

"Get me that flash drive, and I'll take care of it for you."

"I've already paid Byte 7. Let's not make a fuss about it," Dorothy said. She did not want to keep circling back to the topic of the flash drive. In fact, lately, she could not quite figure out what was up with Everett. He seemed to keep touching on topics that were hard to tackle.

Sometimes, Dorothy wondered if he had gotten wind of something!

Everett just glanced up at her and crooked a finger. "Come here."

Not wanting to trigger him to get up, she obediently set aside her laptop and snuggled into Everett's embrace.

"Are you coming down with something? Your voice sounds off."

"Maybe. You're probably the cause of it."

Dorothy rolled her eyes. "Mr. Lopez, always so stoic, now you're getting upset over everything? I must be quite the force, then."

He huffed lightly. "You've always been quite the force."

"Thanks for the compliment."

With a sudden flex of his arm, Everett pulled her entire body onto the bed.

Dorothy was so startled she did not dare move. "Are you out of your mind? You just had stitches removed, and you're still bleeding!"

"When I just had surgery, it did not stop me from making you feel good, did it? What's a little blood?"

Dorothy really wanted to kick him!

She thought Everett was in the mood again, but he did not try to undress her this time. He just held her, entwined with her, savoring her scent.

When he was too close, his breath tickled her neck.

"What's wrong?"

She sensed something off about him.

"Nothing, just want to hold you for a bit."

Dorothy frowned and reached up to check his forehead.

"Everett, you have a fever!"

No wonder his voice was so nasal; he was clearly powering through.

"Don't overreact, a little cuddle, and I'll be fine."

"I'm not a fever reducer." Dorothy worried that his fever could lead to complications. After all, fever was just a symptom; what if it was caused by an infection in his organs or at the wound site?

"Let go. I'll get Dr. Quincy to take a look at you."

At the mention of that name, Everett's eyebrows knitted together.

"Don't let her come."

"You're being picky about doctors now?" Dorothy thought his germaphobia was acting up, not wanting a female doctor to examine him. "Come on, let's get that fever down. Dr. Quincy performed your surgery; she knows your condition best! Fevers can be serious or not, but I'll only be able to relax if everything checks out okay."

"It's not that serious. Just get me some fever reducer. I just got a cold."

Everett nestled into her neck, his eyelids growing heavy, verging on sleep.

Unable to persuade him, Dorothy reached out to shove him gently.

"Then let me go. I'll get your medicine."

"If I let go, you'll definitely go find that Quincy."

He did not want to see her.

"Everett, when did you become so stubborn? You're the patient, she's the doctor!"

Everett loosened his grip and turned his body away, giving his back to Dorothy.

She thought he tacitly allowed her to seek out Dr. Quincy, so she got up to leave the bed.

But then, from behind, Everett suddenly spoke in a muffled, heavy tone.

"My dad wants me to marry her."

"Who?" Dorothy asked instinctively.

"Who else?"

At this moment, Dorothy remembered something Jonathan had mentioned before and realized it was not surprising.

She pressed her lips, understanding now why Everett did not want Dr. Quincy to come.

"Oh."

Everett suddenly turned around, sitting up on the bed. "That's it? Oh?"